

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SAJ-01 NIC-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 /093 W

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P R 180414Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6739

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 1753

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EA

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION CHARTS ITS POLITICAL FUTURE

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 1612

1. SUMMARY: IN MEETING OF ITS CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE (CWC) APRIL 17, MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA) MADE ATTEMPT TO CHART ITS POLITICAL FUTURE BY ASSERTING ITS ROLE AS PRIMARY CHINESE PARTNER IN GOVERNMENT, PROMOTING CAUSE OF CHINESE UNITY AND AGREEING TO NEGOTIATE WITH OTHER CHINESE-BASED PARTIES (INCLUDING OPPOSITION DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY) ON COMMON PLATFORM WITHIN NATIONAL FRONT. END SUMMARY.

2. DAY-LONG MEETING OF MCA CNETRAL WORKING COMMITTEE (CWC) APRIL 17 PRODUCED A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES WHICH MAY GIVE THE PARTY NEGOTIATING OPTIONS AS THE ALLIANCE AND NATIONAL FRONT  
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OF PRIME MINISTER RAZAK PREPARE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS.

PRINCIPAL INITIATIVES, AS OUTLINED BY ACTING MCA PRESIDENT LEE SAN CHOON, ARE MCA DECISION TO SUPPORT NATIONAL FRONT AND PM RAZAK'S LEADERSHIP BUT SAN CHOON SAID THAT "MCA WILL NOT LOSE ITS IDENTITY AS VEHICLE FOR CHANNELLING OF POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF CHINESE, JUST AS UMNO IS CHANNEL OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION FOR MALAYS". MCA SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL FRONT, HOWEVER, IS ALSO CONTINGENT ON HOW NATIONAL FRONT CONCEPT "IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND WHAT FORM IT IS TO TAKE." MCA WILL MAKE A STRONG BID FOR CHINESE UNITY AND SAN CHOON INDICATED PARTY IS "PREPARED TO GO A GREAT EXTENT TO ACCOMMODATE VIEWS OF OTHERS FOR SAKE OF UNITY OF CHINESE COMMUNITY". IN THIS VIEN, MCA OFFERED TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER NATIONAL FRONT PARTIES (IMPLICITLY GERAKAN AND PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY) AND EVEN OPPOSITION DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY TO FORMULATE COMMON GOALS FOR REPRESENTATION OF CHINESE COMMUNITY.

3. REGARDING CRUCIAL POINT ON DIVISION OF ELECTORAL SEATS AMONG NATIONAL FRONT PARTIES, ALLIANCE SECRETARY-GENERAL MICHAEL CHEN, ALSO MEMBER OF MCA CWC, TOLD PRESS APRIL 13 THAT MCA WOULD NOT INSIST ON CONTESTING ALL ITS 33 "TRADITIONAL" SEATS AND THAT SOME COULD BE GIVEN TO OTHER NON-MALAY PARTIES IN NATIONAL FRONT BUT NOT MALAY CANDIDATES. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS, EX-MCA REFORMER DR LIM KENG YAIK, NOW IN THE GERAKAN, SAID ON APRIL 14 THAT CHINESE-BASED PARTIES IN NATIONAL FRONT SHOULD REACH AGREEMENT ON COMMON PLATFORM ON BASIS OF MULTIRACIALISM. ALSO, EX-DAP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT GOH HOCK GUAN HAS JOINED GERAKAN, THUS ADDING STRENGTH TO LEE SAN CHOON'S POSITION WITHIN NATIONAL FRONT.

4. COMMENT: MELANGE OF PROPOSALS ANNOUNCED BY MCA ON APRIL 17 LEAVE PARTY'S OPTIONS OPEN. AS NOTED IN REFTEL, MCA APPEARS TO BE VACILLATING BETWEEN ASSERTING ITSELF AS UMNO'S PRINCIPAL CHINESE PARTNER (PARA 3C) AND SEEKING NEW NON-MALAY ALIGNMENT AMONG NATIONAL FRONT PARTIES (PARA 3D). IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT SAN CHOON AND OTHER TOP MCA LEADERS MUST FIND SOME WAY TO KEEP MCA IN THE GOVERNMENT, ALLIANCE AND NATIONAL FRONT, AT SAME TIME MAINTAINING CREDIBILITY WITH PARTY RANK AND FILE WHO ARE DETERMINED TO PRESERVE MCA'S "TRADITIONAL" 33 SEATS AND HAVE BEEN STIMULATED ON CHINESE

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CHAUVINIST ISSUES (PARA 4 REFTEL). IN SHORT TIME REMAINING BEFORE ELECTIONS, IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT MCA WILL ACHIEVE SUBSTANTIAL RESTRUCTURING OF NON-MALAY PARTIES IN NATIONAL FRONT (UCH LESS WITH THE DIEHARD OPPOSITIONIST DAP), BUT ALL SIGNS POINT TO A PRAGMATIC AGREEMENT, PERHAPS ALONG LINE OF FORMULA SUGGESTED BY MICHAEL CHEN, TO KEEP A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF SEATS WITHIN THE NATIONAL FRONT'S NON-MALAY CAMP.

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## Message Attributes

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